UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-EIGHTH SESSION

Official Records

SECOND COMMITTEE
13th meeting
held on
Tuesday, 19 October 1993
at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 13th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. MONGBE (Benin)

CONTENTS

AGENDA ITEM 12: REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (continued)

This record is subject to correction. Corrections should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned *within one week of the date of the publication* to the Chief of the Official Records Editing Section, room DC2-794, 2 United Nations Plaza, and incorporated in a copy of the record.

Corrections will be issued after the end of the session, in a separate corrigendum for each Committee.

Distr. GENERAL
A/C.2/48/SR.13
5 November 1993

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

93-81678 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 12: REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (continued) (A/48/3, A/48/159-E/1993/59, A/48/172, A/48/182, A/48/183-E/1993/74 and Add.1, A/48/188-E/1993/78, A/48/276, A/48/338, A/48/353-S/26372, A/48/484-S/26552, A/48/498)

1. Mr. BAILLARGEON (Canada) said that true reform of the economic and social sector of the United Nations must involve not only a revision of the structure of the Economic and Social Council but a fundamental analysis culminating in the initiative for an agenda for development. Just as the report entitled "An Agenda for Peace" had revitalized the role of the United Nations in matters involving peace and political security, so the agenda for development must have a reforming influence on the economic and social sectors.

2. The restructuring process must continue. Positive results had come from the format of the coordination and high-level segment and the former could be further improved. A method must be found to bring about a real exchange of views among delegations. A key question that had been raised concerned the type of relationship needed between the Council and the organs it supervised. The Council's supervisory role must be clarified, which involved agreeing on the extent to which it should revise the reports submitted to it. In examining the technical recommendations contained in such reports, the Council should concentrate on their potential impact on coordination of the activities of the various organs in the system. It should also ensure that the policy direction and orientation adopted were actually honoured by its subsidiary organs. Its role in reviewing the financial implications of the decisions referred to it should be scrutinized very carefully. It should not assume the task of reviewing the technical content of those reports, just as subsidiary organs should not request the Council to endorse sections or recommendations requiring specialized expertise. In seeking to reform its decision-making process, the Council should reinforce constructive partnerships with actors outside the United Nations system, including research and non-governmental organizations. His Government welcomed the decision to create an open-ended working group to examine how the Economic and Social Council could enhance its relations with non-governmental organizations.

3. The task of rethinking an economic and social sector that would enable the United Nations to play a more active role was not an easy one, but failure would mean increased marginalization, and Canada attached too great an importance to the Organization to allow that to happen.

4. Mr. HUSLID (Norway), speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries, said that they wished to stress the need for economic assistance to the Palestinian people. The signing of the Declaration of Principles by Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization represented an historical breakthrough, however if the peace process was to succeed, it must be accompanied and strengthened by economic development. Peace would not flourish unless the international community rapidly committed resources to its realization. The dual task of providing much-needed short-term aid and building the basis for achieving long-term development goals must be accomplished in order to maintain broad popular support for the Declaration. One of the main objectives should be to assist the Palestinian people in establishing the necessary institutions and

(Mr. Huslid, Norway)

conditions for taking charge of their own development. Although the Declaration of Principles applied only to the West Bank and Gaza, the needs of the hundreds of thousands of Palestinians confined to camps in Jordan, Lebanon and Syria could not be ignored.

5. The recent donor conference had resulted in pledges totalling approximately 2 billion dollars. The Nordic countries were pleased with its outcome, which represented a vital step in the follow-up to the peace process. The pledges must next be translated into concrete activities to improve the living conditions of the Palestinian people. An efficient and functional coordinating structure for international assistance must put the funds to work immediately and to maximize their total impact. The World Bank should continue to play its important and constructive role in the process, in addition to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). The United Nations must be actively involved in the follow-up to the peace process. It was important that the resolutions drafted regarding the situation in the Middle East should adequately reflect the momentous developments in the region.

6. Mr. BAHADIAN (Brazil) said that the 1993 substantive session of the Economic and Social Council had been held under the revised format agreed on under the restructuring and revitalization process. Therefore, it was appropriate to take stock of the results in order to provide input to the ongoing reform process. Some degree of confusion seemed to persist regarding the exact nature of the high-level and coordination segments. His delegation concurred that the President's summary of the high-level segment should reflect the thrust of the discussions only and should not constitute any kind of legislative mandate or binding agreement among members. Agreed conclusions, however, did represent a clear set of directives to the system with evident legislative authority. That format demanded, therefore, an open and transparent negotiating process so that it could faithfully reflect the consensus of the member States. Further progress was needed in the evolution from the traditional format of prepared statements to a genuine and free exchange of views during the high-level segment.

7. The experience of the most recent session of the Council seemed to indicate that "expertization" of its subsidiary bodies had not greatly enhanced their efficiency and effectiveness. It could be concluded that agreements reached at the level of subsidiary bodies had very little value, as it appeared that they were often renegotiated at the plenary meetings. Serious consideration must be given to the future path of the reform process. His delegation also hoped that a consensus could be achieved quickly on draft resolution A/47/L.58/Rev.1. The Committee should concentrate its efforts on determining clearly the relationship between the Economic and Social Council and its subsidiary bodies and laying out precise guidelines for the format, nature and scope of the reports submitted by those bodies to the Council.

8. Mr. BLANEY (United States of America) said that, at the 1993 regular session of the Economic and Social Council, progress had been achieved in the coordination of humanitarian assistance. Positive steps had also been taken to improve coordination of the HIV/AIDS control effort within the United Nations system. His delegation underscored its support for Council resolution 1993/51

(Mr. Blaney, United States)

which requested the World Health Assembly to study the feasibility of a joint and co-sponsored United Nations programme on HIV and AIDS as a means of ensuring that all relevant agencies played their appropriate roles. The Council had continued to eschew ideological debates on the substance of issues already reviewed in subsidiary bodies and had acted as a pragmatic coordinating body, as envisioned in the Charter.

9. His Government wished to clarify its position regarding the granting of consultative status to non-governmental organizations at activities related to the Economic and Social Council. At the 1993 regular session, the United States Government had joined the majority of member States in voting to approve the Council's endorsement of the recommendation to grant consultative status to the International Lesbian and Gay Association (ILGA). It had recently learned, however, that an organization called the "North American Man Boy Love Association" (NAMBLA), whose primary purpose was to advocate paedophilia, a form of child abuse opposed by all members of the international community, was a member of ILGA. Had his delegation known that NAMBLA was a member of ILGA, it would not have supported the recommendation to grant it official status. In the event that his Government did not obtain a satisfactory clarification of the matter from ILGA, it was its intent to move at the next resumed or regular session of the Council to change its vote on that issue. Nevertheless, the United States continued to believe that non-governmental organizations contributed important resources in terms of expertise, personnel, data and alternative perspectives from which all members could benefit as they worked towards mutual understanding and resolution of global problems.

10. Mr. YEGOROV (Belarus) said that efforts to improve the organization of work of the Economic and Social Council should continue and that talks on the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields should be resumed. Greater account should be taken of the useful proposals which had been made, including the proposal by the Secretary-General that the Economic and Social Council should report to the Security Council on situations which threatened international peace and security.

11. The results achieved at the Council's latest session again demonstrated the importance of selecting internationally significant themes involving the activities of a number of specialized agencies for consideration at the high-level and coordination segments. Attention should also be given to the recommendations contained in Council resolution 1993/61 on strengthening the role of the regional commissions.

12. His delegation welcomed the broad support expressed for the results of the first session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, and the adoption of the resolutions on scientific and technological aspects of the conversion of military capacity for civilian use and sustainable development (1993/70), on strengthening the role of the Commission on Transnational Corporations (1993/49) and on the 1993 System of National Accounts (1993/5), and of decisions 1993/328 and 1993/232 on preparations for the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction and on strengthening of international cooperation and coordination of efforts to study, mitigate and minimize the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster. It also welcomed the proposals made to enhance coordination of the

(Mr. Yegorov, Belarus)

activities of the three States concerned, the United Nations, non-governmental organizations and business and scientific circles.

13. Mr. ALIOU (Cameroon), noting that Cameroon would be hosting the Fifth General Conference of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), said that one of the challenges facing the international community was to find ways of putting an end to the disparities and deprivations which were the lot of a vast majority of the world's population. The importance of industrial development in the process of bringing about a more prosperous, equitable and stable world order could not be overemphasized. Council resolution 1993/62 emphasized the importance of industrialization in the development of Africa and the role of UNIDO in that process. It also stressed the importance of a constructive dialogue between industrialized and developing countries, taking into account the aspirations and legitimate interests of Africa in the area of industrialization.

14. Mr. RAMADAN (Egypt) welcomed the adoption of Council decision 1993/207 on the establishment of the Commission on Sustainable Development, resolutions 1993/4 and 1993/76 concerning the International Conference on Population and Development. In particular he welcomed the recommendation contained in resolution 1993/76 that the Preparatory Committee for the International Conference on Population and Development should become a subsidiary body of the General Assembly.

15. There was growing concern over the widening gap between the advanced and the developing countries. The United Nations was called upon to assume its responsibilities under Chapter IX of the Charter to promote higher standards of living, solutions of international economic and social problems and universal respect for human rights. The Economic and Social Council, pursuant to its mandate under Article 62 of the Charter, was called upon to use its full powers to ensure the stability necessary for peaceful relations between States.

16. With regard to restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields, and the draft resolution contained in document A/47/L.58/Rev.1, his delegation agreed that the Economic and Social Council should have a greater role with respect to coordination of the specialized agencies.

17. Revitalization of the Economic and Social Council required effective support for the regional commissions and their programmes. His delegation had been concerned at the ambiguity of certain resolutions on the regional commissions considered at the substantive session. The Economic Commission for Africa played an important role in implementing the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s and in supporting African regional integration and urged all countries to support the regional commissions.

18. The contents of the report on the economic and social consequences of the establishment of settlements by Israel in the Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, occupied since 1967, and the Syrian Golan (A/48/188) were cause for great concern. Egypt welcomed the recent Palestinian-Israeli agreement as a positive step, which should be accompanied by fundamental changes in the

(Mr. Ramadan, Egypt)

previous detrimental practices, and should have a positive impact on the situation in the occupied territories.

19. It was regrettable that the Committee formerly known as the Committee on the Development and Utilization of New and Renewable Sources of Energy had not met since the adoption of General Assembly resolution 46/235 on 13 April 1992; that did not reflect well on the interest of the international community in that important topic.

20. Finally, he expressed dissatisfaction with the current late issuance of documents. There could be no fruitful discussion of agenda items when the relevant documents were not distributed until the morning of the debate.

21. Mr. ALDOSARI (Bahrain) said that the sheer diversity of the economic and social problems facing the world made it imperative to focus on priority issues. In order to streamline the work of the Economic and Social Council it was essential to keep the agenda under control, rationalize documentation and ensure constant coordination with other United Nations bodies and agencies, in particular the General Assembly.

22. His delegation hoped that the specialized agencies would coordinate their policies and activities so that the goals of the forthcoming conferences dealing respectively with population and development, social development and women could be achieved. He endorsed the activities of the specialized agencies in support of national efforts aimed at increasing economic effectiveness and sustainable growth and development through privatization, and also welcomed the exchange of information between Member States on that subject. He called for better coordination of humanitarian assistance and enhanced preparedness, capacity-building and planning in that regard, and for prompt measures to ensure effective emergency information management and to strengthen response capacity. His country endorsed the goals of the updated global AIDS strategy.

23. It was time to strengthen the foundations of peace and stability in the Middle East in order to achieve development in that region and, in that connection, his delegation supported the General Assembly resolutions calling for assistance to the Palestinian people and the implementation of development projects in the occupied Palestinian territory.

The meeting rose at 11.15 a.m.